

U.S. PIRG

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Public Citizen

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Henry Waxman
U.S. House of Representatives
2204 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: U.S. PIRG & Public Citizen support H.R. 1038, the Access to Life-Saving Medicine Act

Dear Representative Waxman:

U.S. PIRG supports H.R. 1038, the Access to Life-Saving Medicine Act. Biologics offer life-saving treatments for diseases like cancer, diabetes, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, multiple sclerosis and arthritis; however, their high costs prevent many Americans from benefiting from them.

According to an *Associated Press* article in *The New York Times* ("Generic Biotech Drugs Could Save \$71B," February 15, 2007), biotech drugs cost \$40 billion in 2005 and are expected to more than double in cost by 2009. Biotech drugs are increasing at a rate three times faster than the traditional costs of drugs.

Many biologics are coming to end or have reached their patent terms. More than \$10 billion worth of biologics are expected to come off patent in the next five years, but without legislation, there is no framework for the approval of generic alternatives to biologics, after patents have expired. Without this pathway, the costs of biological therapies are prohibitively expensive for many people struggling with devastating diseases.

Health care consumers could save \$71 billion over 10 years with generic biotech medicines, according to an Express Scripts study released in February 2007. If H.R. 1038 passes, it will offer enormous savings to severely ill patients/consumers.

Sincerely,



Paul Brown, U.S. PIRG Consumer Health Care Advocate



Linda Andros, Legislative Counsel, Congress
Watch, Public Citizen
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cc: Rep. Frank Pallone